



*Report to the
Auburn Urban
Development Authority*

Action Item

4

Agenda Item No.

City Manager's Approval

To: Chair and Board Members
From: Robert Richardson, Executive Director
Date: February 14, 2011
Subject: Request for funds to upgrade the Maple Street Billboard.

The Issue

Shall the Board of Directors direct staff to perform all necessary due diligence for the acquisition and installation of an electronic message board at the Maple Street Billboard?

Conclusion and Recommendation

That the Board hear the community presentation, and if persuaded to move forward, allocate \$60,000 in AUDA funds for the project and direct staff to perform all necessary due diligence for the project.

Background

During the last AUDA meeting, the Board of Directors directed staff to initiate a new work plan of redevelopment projects. At that meeting community member Virgil Traynor requested funding for an electronic sign board at the Maple Street Billboard. The Board directed that this item return once there was additional information to consider the request. Attached is a report provided by Mr. Traynor and Snyder requesting the funding. Community Development Director Wong has studied the request and will be available to answer any procedural questions that the Board may have.

Fiscal Impact

The request is for a not-to-exceed amount of \$60,000.

Attachments

Report from Mr. Traynor and Mr. Snyder.



Report to the Auburn City Council

Action Item

4
Continued
Agenda Item No.

City Manager's Approval

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Virgil Traynor and Bob Snyder
Date: February 14, 2011
Subject: Maple Street Community Billboard Changes

The Issue

The Maple Street community billboard is the primary method for advertising a wide variety of community events, attracting thousands of visitors to our community. Over the last few years, it has become apparent that there are many more requests for advertising space than the present operation permits. The billboard space is completely allocated and many events that promote our community are unable to advertise and draw visitors. If this situation is not addressed, the present method of advertising events will continue to seriously impact the City's economic activity, as visitors are the lifeblood of our Old Town, Downtown and the 49 Corridor business districts.

Research has revealed a very cost-effective solution to this problem. The Maple Street billboard can be converted to an electronic billboard, a change that would significantly increase the availability of space on the billboard as well as the ease of changing the messages. This change will also give the City a new opportunity to place important community announcements on the billboard, such as the annual clean water program, *at no cost*. A change to an electronic format will attract many community event organizers that want to advertise their event but cannot now schedule the billboard because of the lack of available space. Overall, with the increased capabilities of this sign format, organizers will now be able to attract more participants to area activities.

Conclusion and Recommendation

It is recommended that the City Council authorize the City Manager to purchase an electronic billboard for the Maple Street sign at a cost not to exceed \$60,000 from available economic development funds.

Background

In summary, the proposal is simply to change the format and operations of the billboard so that it can accommodate the dissemination of more information to the public, resulting in increased exposure to area activities and community events. Other than the physical changes required to program and operate the billboard, no change to current use requirements is being proposed.

The billboard will be programmed through a computer at the Chamber of Commerce, and operate with the software provided in the package installation. Chamber staff will be able to input messages and images at any time, at no additional cost other than staff time, since it is very easy to change the community message. The sign is connected to the computer only when uploading messages, has its own internal memory, and displays the playlist continually until changed.

The current design guidelines regarding permissible colors will remain in place for the electronic version. It is also proposed that current billboard use requirements remain in place, as it is restricted to advertising for Auburn area community activities. There will be no direct advertising by business, although it will be permissible to mention business sponsors by name on the event advertising and the business name will not occupy more than 25% of the billboard layout. The expectation is that this provision will encourage businesses to sponsor community events.

Fiscal Impact

The sign will be purchased as a complete package from the most qualified vendor and at the least total cost, estimated at a one-time cost not exceed \$60,000. It will be delivered, installed, and connected by the manufacturer who will also provide a ten-year warrantee.

The City will be reimbursed ongoing utility costs of approximately \$300 to \$600 per month by the Chamber from the sign revenue, and will not pay for advertising community events. Sign revenue, managed by the Chamber will also be used to establish a sign replacement fund to address the future needs after the expiration of the ten-year warrantee. No additional costs above the initial package price are expected.

Attachments

None.

